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Report of the Supervisor of Administration relative...

Boston

1917

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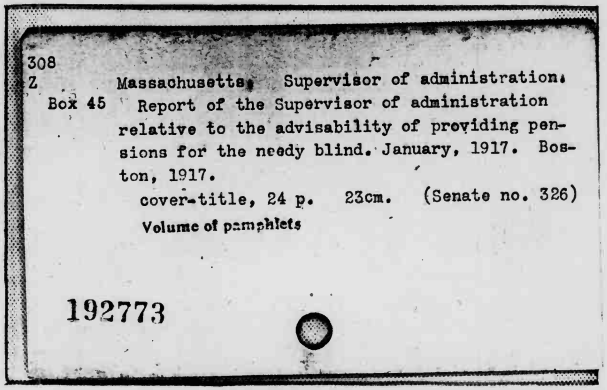

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SENATE No. 326

REPORT

OF THE

SUPERVISOR OF ADMINISTRATION RELATIVE TO THE ADVISABILITY OF PROVIDING PENSIONS FOR THE NEEDY BLIND.

JANUARY, 1917.

BOSTON:
WRIGHT & POTTER PRINTING CO., STATE PRINTERS,
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MR 20 1917

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

OFFICE OF SUPERVISOR OF ADMINISTRATION,
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON, Jan. 10, 1917.

Mr. HENRY D. COOLIDGE, *Clerk of the Senate, State House, Boston.*

DEAR SIR: — In accordance with the provisions of chapter 139 of the Resolves of 1916, this department, as the successor of the former Commission on Economy and Efficiency, is submitting herewith a report on the advisability of providing pensions for the needy blind.

Very truly yours,

CHARLES E. BURBANK,
Supervisor of Administration.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Office of Supervisor of Administration,
State House, Boston, Jan. 10, 1917.

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives.

In accordance with the provisions of chapter 139 of the Resolves of 1916 the Supervisor of Administration submits the following report of an investigation as to the advisability of providing pensions for the needy blind. The investigation originated under the Commission on Economy and Efficiency. On the abolition of that body and the creation of the office of Supervisor of Administration the work was continued and completed.

The resolve authorizing the report is as follows: —

Resolved, That the commission on economy and efficiency be directed to make an investigation relative to the advisability of providing pensions for the needy blind, either as indicated by senate document number two hundred and thirty of the current year, or by such other method as may be deemed desirable, and to report thereon, with any recommendations which the commission may deem expedient, not later than the second Wednesday in January in the year nineteen hundred and seventeen.

Respectfully submitted,

CHARLES E. BURBANK,
Supervisor of Administration.

REPORT.

The resolve authorizing this report called specifically for an investigation "relative to the advisability of providing pensions for the needy blind, either as indicated by senate document number two hundred and thirty of the current year, or by such other method as may be deemed desirable."

The study has been confined as closely as possible to the lines suggested by the Legislature. It has been necessary, however, in order to reach definite conclusions, to make a general survey of the condition of the blind throughout the State. Investigations have accordingly been made as to the number and ages of the resident blind, the existent need of relief, and the character of the relief now being furnished. The necessary statistical work has been supplemented by field studies carried on by agents of this office, which, it is believed, have been sufficiently broad in their scope to justify the findings in this report.

The lack of an accurate census or register of the blind in the State has been a serious handicap. It has made impossible the collection of exact data as to the amount of aid now being given to the blind throughout the State, which properly should be a part of a report of this character. It has also limited the efforts to establish the cost of a pension system to mere estimates. Even though the recommendation may be considered outside the scope of the resolve, steps should be taken to provide for this enumeration of the blind in the immediate future. Pending the taking of a formal census the State Board of Charity, in co-operation with the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, should prepare a register of the blind now receiving relief.

For reasons set forth in the body of the report in some detail it has been found impossible to recommend the adoption of a

general flat pension system for the adult needy blind over twenty-one years of age. The situation has been viewed from many angles and without prejudice, and the question of the possible charge upon the State treasury has been entirely ignored in reaching this conclusion.

We are convinced, however, that there is an obligation on the public authorities to furnish more substantial aid than is now provided, — aid which shall be free from the taint of pauperism, elastic enough to care for those whose cases cannot be treated in any other way, and without injuring the educational, industrial and re-educational work now being carried on throughout the State. Until additional data are secured, however, the plan cannot be outlined.

In order to make a relief program effective, and for the purpose of bettering the condition of the blind as a whole, the appointment of an executive officer who shall have charge of the work seems an absolute necessity. While the work of the various agencies, public and semipublic, which have taken on the care of the blind is deserving of great credit, the amount of public money now being annually spent, and the probability that the total will be increased within the next few years, calls for centralized responsibility. Such an officer would be charged, naturally, with the co-ordination of the various State agencies which have dealings with the blind. He should act with these boards in an expert advisory capacity, and in addition he should be the guardian of the blind in their contact with the various departments and commissions.

These conclusions are based in part on reports as to the work of re-educating the blind with the idea of making them self-supporting which are now being carried on abroad. The great war which has developed an extraordinary number of blinded soldiers has made the problem one of vital importance. No doubt many of the stories being told by enthusiastic laymen of the success attending these efforts can be materially discounted, but the knowledge that the ablest of foreign educators are devoting themselves with extraordinary energy to the task makes the experiment one worthy of attention. America has struggled with this problem for fifty years and with indifferent success. Yet the possible prize is of such value that

the wisest course would seem to be to broaden the relief system but withhold any general pension settlement until the success or failure of the foreign efforts are established.

The Blind in Massachusetts.

The Number in State. — A natural preliminary in any investigation as to the advisability of allowing pensions or relief is a statistical inquiry as to the number and ages of the blind. It is with regret the admission must be made that although Federal and State census authorities, as well as other public and private agencies, were consulted, it is impossible to furnish the Legislature with exact figures for the State. From the mass of conflicting reports, however, it can be safely stated that there are not less than 4,000 and not more than 5,000 blind people in the Commonwealth. The number of totally blind is somewhat smaller, but the reduction from a pensioning or relief viewpoint is not material, for the man whose vision simply allows him to distinguish shadows falls naturally within that classification. Again, under the workmen's compensation law, a man whose vision by reason of employment has fallen to one-tenth normal or below is regarded as deserving of special compensation by reason of his misfortune.

To illustrate the confusion as to numbers it is only necessary to quote the various authorities. The United States census report for 1910 allows for only 2,046 blind in the State; the 1915 State census, which presumably was taken by the same enumerators as assisted in the Federal report, allow that there are 2,834 blind. Miss Lucy Wright, general superintendent of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, in a letter to this office, estimated the number of the blind as "at least 4,000, probably more." The State census of 1905 recorded 3,676 blind resident in the State, and Horace Wadlin, former chief of the Bureau of Labor and Statistics, in 1900, in a special monograph, established the number at 3,983. But this confusion as to the number of the blind has not been confined to this State, by any means. In many of the States where pension or elaborate relief plans have been put in operation there has been a rapid increase in the number of blind people over the number originally registered.

The Age of the Blind. — The age of the blind is of vital moment to those considering the problem from a pension or relief viewpoint. Consideration has to be given to the age of the blind in order to secure a proper understanding of the remedial means best suited to the different groups. A division has to be made between the aged, who fall naturally into a relief group because physical exertion is impossible or unduly wasteful of their energies, and the younger body which may be trained in industrial pursuits. Equally important for the settling of the problem is exact information as to the age at which blindness occurred. A man of sixty who has been blind since the age of twenty, at the age of sixty may yet be able to contribute something to his support, or even be self-sustaining. But a man of fifty who has only been blind for one or two years may be beyond industrial re-education if the idea of the same is to make him even a partially self-supporting unit.

At least one-half of the blind population of Massachusetts is over sixty years of age. The United States census authorities, in the special report on the blind in the United States founded on the 1910 census, credits New England with having the largest percentage of blind people over sixty in the entire country. On a percentage basis it figured the New England States at 55.3 per cent., and it is a reasonable presumption that the figures without change can be taken for Massachusetts. The Federal authorities have figured 35 per cent. of the New England blind as between twenty and fifty-nine years of age. An estimate made in this department on the basis of 5,000 blind in the State set the percentage mark at 37, a natural increase, as the location within State lines of education and medical institutions of national importance generally operates to increase the average population. "The blind population of today is a distinctly older population than it was fifty years ago. It is probable that this tendency towards concentration in the older groups will become even more prominent in the future."[1]

The preponderance of the blind of sixty years of age and over must be borne in mind all the time. The following tabulation to which reference is made above illustrates this text: —

[1] "The Blind in the United States," p. 31, United States census, 1910.

Ages of Massachusetts Blind Population.

Ages.	Number.	Per Cent.
Under 20 years,	550	11
20 to 60 years,	1,850	37
60 and over,	2,600	52
	5,000	100

Age Risk of Blindness. — While in the present world war blindness is an affliction which is reaching the relatively young, and while in the United States those who lose their sight through industrial employment or accident belong to a young age group, blindness is primarily a defect attendant upon old age, and probably will always continue so. The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind has reported that 30 per cent. of those known to the Commission did not lose their sight till after sixty years of age. A Federal investigation made for the "Blind in the United States" disclosed that 49 per cent. of those returning schedules reported blindness after this age period.

This, it might be said, is the one figure on which there seems to be general agreement. Federal authorities have made estimates as to the risk of blindness at lower ages, but they do not commend the accuracy of the figures. The complications entailed in the work of rehabilitation by this large group of persons who become blind at an advanced age can be easily appreciated without the use of charts or tables.

The Problem of the Blind. — Notwithstanding liberal expenditures running over a period of some years in the procuring and furnishing of specialized academic and industrial training for the blind, the efforts in Massachusetts to make the blind self-supporting have not been marked with success.

The training given in the schools, especially to the younger blind, has increased materially their chances, as has been proved by various investigations, but school attendance of itself has not automatically removed them from the state of dependency. That was the ambition of the early students of the condition

of the blind, but it is to the credit of those in charge of the activities in this State that they have modified their program and their expectations.

Under the auspices of the various associations interested, and with the approval of the State, a gradual change has been taking place by which the Commonwealth, after serving for a time in the rôle of schoolmaster, inculcating industrial training, has in addition become an employer of the labor so trained, because of the inability to find any other market for the same. The competition between the blind and the sighted has proved disastrous to the former.

Fortunately, Massachusetts has never attempted to view this problem from an economic, commercial or financial standpoint. Its hope still is to make the blind as nearly self-supporting as possible, but even though an absolute failure is scored on that point the funds of the State will be spent in carrying on the educational program on which it embarked many years ago.

The task of trying to make the educated and industrially trained blind self-supporting has, in short, baffled the entire world. In other States and other countries the same wide gap between the earning of the blind and the amount required for their support has been noted. In short, it is now generally accepted and admitted that while the goal was a worthy one it was practically impossible of attainment.

Mr. Henry Stainsby, secretary-general of the National Institute for the Blind, London, Eng., in a statement submitted to this office, has frankly put his finger on the difficulty. "Probably the maximum output of which he [the blind worker] is capable will average about one-third that of the fully equipped sighted man." In another portion of the same statement Mr. Stainsby declared that "It is a well-established fact that the average blind worker, merely by the exercise of his own industry, cannot win for himself a standard of subsistence that is comparable to the remuneration obtainable by the normal man employed in the same or kindred occupation."

J. P. Hamilton, superintendent of the Michigan Employment Institute for the Blind, at Saginaw, Mich., at the 1907 Charities and Correction Conference, admitted that while the school at Lansing had turned out about 1,500 blind people, less than

5 per cent. have become self-supporting. The Federal investigation experts have also reported that only one-third of those who lost their sight between the ages of twenty-five and forty-four had gainful occupations, and only 13.4 per cent. of those who lost it between forty-five and sixty-four, and only 4.3 per cent. of those who became blind after reaching the age of sixty-five had secured the new footing desired.[1]

There is hardly any need to continue the quotations further, for the State and national authorities almost without exception agree that the self-sustaining blind man is unfortunately an exception, and that no public budget for the care of the blind can be seriously predicated on the theory that he is typical of the entire group.

Dual Program necessary. — This admission, that aid is an absolute necessity for the young as well as the middle-aged blind, would seem to invite the adoption of a general pension bill, as proposed. On the contrary, the need being general imposes a special responsibility, as to the methods to be used, on those in authority.

Both groups need and probably always will need aid, but unless care is exercised in the manner in which it is furnished there is grave danger of destroying gains which have been made in recent years in this State.

For the younger group, so called, the aid must always be in the form of wages for labor performed along the lines in which the afflicted have been trained. Exceptions will have to be made, of course, for men and women who for physical or other reasons cannot be brought in touch with the shops, and for that emergency a relief program, elastic in form to allow the necessary discretion, should be considered. But even though the shops conducted by the State may fail to balance as commercial undertakings, the work which they are doing is too important to be lost. A general pension or aid system, as has been proposed, might not only make the continuation of the shops a financial impossibility, but would seriously injure the morale of the younger group.

The members of the older group in the main present a relief problem. They should be safeguarded in their rights to home

[1] "The Blind in the United States," p. 138.

instruction as provided by law, and any disposition they may display to acquire the industrial training which is furnished in the shops should be gratified. It is to be doubted, however, if they can be expected to earn enough to take a rank as being engaged in a gainful occupation. They must look to aid given with discretion, and with an appreciation of family as well as unit conditions which the flat pensions bill under general discussion would make impossible.

The Need of Centralized Responsibility. — There is always a considerable temptation, where the problem, as in this case, is an involved one, to suggest the creation of a special department for its handling. The creation of a new department, however, no matter how modest the beginning, inevitably involves the State in an annual fixed charge which is apt to increase steadily from year to year. This would not be the case, however, in substituting an adequately paid commissioner with an advisory council to assume the duties of the present commission in Massachusetts. The change would result in a centralization of authority, the fixing of responsibility and a more effective handling of the relief and other problems of the blind. The commissioner should have some supervisory authority in determining the amount to be allowed, as well as the manner of payment if, later, relief legislation is enacted.

The suggestion for the appointment of a paid commissioner was only reached after the inadequacy of the present methods for handling the blind problem became apparent. The problem of employment has, for one thing, become very pressing through the operation of the workmen's compensation law, which makes the employment of the blind in manufactories run on a strict commercial basis practically impossible. The new official among his other duties should endeavor to secure some waiver of the prohibitive provision of the law.

Flat-rate Pensions inadvisable. — Advocates of aid to the needy blind have presented to past Legislatures bills providing for the granting of pensions. These different bills were nearly identical, and evidently patterned upon the existing pension laws of other States.

The bill studied by this office (Senate 230, 1916) proposes an annual pension of $150 per annum. A flat-rate basis of aiding

the blind is indefensible. This amount given to certain individuals would be in excess of their needs; to others, so small in the face of their wants that to establish such a system, having knowledge of its limitations, would be folly. There is no doubt but that the sympathies of the taxpayers are with the blind population, but concern must be felt that the people's sympathies are not wasted. Moreover, any form of relief which considers the need on the basis of the individual is bound to result in disaster. The State enacts legislation for the family as the basic unit of government, and there is no reason why the family of the blind person should be eliminated as a unit, even in the consideration of relief.

It is not the intention of this office to burden the report with all the evidence received relative to the advisability of granting pensions. Certain comments are so pertinent, however, that they properly belong in this report. Mr. R. B. Irwin, connected with the educational department of the Cleveland schools, and who served in an advisory capacity with regard to the apportionment of the pension for the blind in that vicinity, wrote: —

> . . . I feel it would be a grave mistake for any State to adopt in its entirety the Ohio relief law as it now stands upon the statute books. . . . In preparing a plan for dealing with the relief of needy blind persons in Massachusetts, I hope that every effort will be made to eliminate the pauperizing effect so noticeable in Ohio. It is a deplorable fact that in this State at least 50 per cent. of the recipients of the blind relief would never have thought of applying for public charity had it not been for the loosely drawn and more loosely administered blind relief law.

Senate Bill 230 of 1916 is drawn upon the plan of this bill.

The superintendent of the Wisconsin School for the Blind, Mr. J. T. Hooper, wrote: —

> My own opinion is that the pension law, as now operating in Wisconsin, is not an entire success. The difficulty lies in the fact that its administration is left with local county officers, and it is used somewhat for political purposes, that is, the county officer is very apt not to turn down applicants for fear of its political effect. As a consequence, there are quite a number getting pensions who do not deserve it, and who have no right to have it.

Authorities in Maine note the lack of a certain supervisory power, and express fear that some are receiving pensions who are not in need.

Other officials warned against semiannual or quarterly payments, claiming they were not frequent enough in cases of need.

In New York City it is said that better results would follow if the relief was varied to the needs of the individual and if more frequent payments were made. (Payments there are semiannual.)

It has been proven to the satisfaction of this department that a pension bill calling for a stated sum, without adequate supervision guiding its distribution or caring for its growth or development, would be an unwise one to advocate, since the needy blind would not be provided for satisfactorily, and there would be the grave danger that public moneys would be wasted.

Occupational Colony. — Another means suggested of helping the blind in this State has been the establishment of an occupational colony. It was believed by those who presented the bill, asking for the establishment of this institution, that it would serve two purposes. Its chief purpose was that it should be used as an industrial training school for men, and secondly, that it would be a place of residence for certain groups among the blind for whom institutional care was desirable. As a training school it was argued that the colony would be more economical than the manner in which apprentices are trained at the present time. As a home it would serve for the group above named, and they might be given some small tasks if situated permanently in an institution of this character. With relation to this suggestion this office has found that very few of the blind themselves are in favor of the colony. Even among those who advocate the pension this plan is looked upon with disfavor, since they claim that it would pauperize the blind who would be residents of the institution. There are others who say that this type of blind should not be kept in an institution of this sort, and that this occupational colony should be one thing or the other, — a training school or an institution. This colony was advocated by the Commission for

the Blind, who were very frank in stating that it was looked upon as an experiment, but that they felt that conditions at the present time justify them in attempting such an experiment. Among the blind people, however, it was the consensus of opinion that no good would come of it, and it is looked upon with disfavor.

In connection with the investigation which the State Board of Education made in 1899 at the request of the Legislature, concerning the instruction of the adult blind in their homes, the late Mr. Anagnos, who was for many years director of the Perkins Institution, wrote, concerning working homes, that such a system was a mistaken one. He said: —

> Even were such a movement successful from a financial point of view, — a fact which has never yet been proved, in spite of repeated experiments in this country, — the idea embodied in the system of working homes is a mistaken one. By the establishment and support of special institutions, which in reality are almshouses pure and simple, disguised under the misleading name of industrial homes, blind adults of both sexes are segregated from ordinary society and form a sort of community by themselves, which is decidedly injurious to their intellectual, social, moral and spiritual interest. By gathering under its roof not only the good and deserving persons but also a part of very undesirable elements, it lowers the moral standard of the blind, dulls the incentives to honest endeavor, and offers inducements for seeking refuge under it to those who are inclined to be indolent and discontented under the effect of a wholesome discipline. To the careful student and impartial investigator of the facts relating to the prevailing industrial system in the civilized world, in which the use of the iron fingers of machinery of every conceivable kind has rendered valueless those of the human flesh, it is clearly evident, that with the exception of mattress making and of the tuning of pianofortes, there is no manual or mechanical occupation whereby the blind can earn their living, even under the most favorable circumstances.

This department believes that until the needs of a large number of the blind are met in other ways no consideration should be given the establishment of such a colony. It should not be lost sight of, too, that the question of homes for the blind exclusively, or placing them in institutions with the seeing, is an open one. This office is of the opinion that the State is better equipped at present to provide aid for her blind requiring institutional care than she is in other directions, and, moreover, believes that the present sources of training her blind are

not exhausted. It is thought that some study might reveal a plan whereby our State, city and town schools could be used as training centers, and also the large money investment of our State armories. For these reasons it remains to be proved that the occupational colony serves the best needs of the blind.

Relief for the Needy Blind.

It is believed that the case for the need of relief has been shown. From the variance of the numbers of the blind as presented by the different authorities in the State (as already noted), the task of determining the initial cost under any scheme would be futile. Furthermore, this office does not believe that any plan of relief should be adopted until a special census of the blind of the Commonwealth is taken, so comprehensive in detail that a report could be made which would allow the Legislature to pass intelligently upon the subject, instead of being asked to initiate a project at this time with only the very meager information which is available as a basis of study.

One of the biggest factors in the opinion of your investigating officer in the solution of the problem would be the re-education of its blind. The tendency in the education of the blind is to instruct according to uses of life. It is understood that in Germany the re-education of the blind of all ages is undertaken to preserve their mental poise, though even as late as fifty years their education is given without the expectation of their becoming self-supporting. And here it might be stated that an important feature of this survey would be the furnishing of information in this respect. The needs of all the blind cannot be furnished by dollars and cents. There are many able, vigorous and eager, even with their affliction, to become self-supporting, and they should not be denied the opportunity.

The institutions of the Commonwealth hold their opportunities for our blind. In Japan massage is recognized as the monoply of blind workers, while in Germany and France, also, the blind act as masseurs. It is well known what difficulty is experienced in securing nurses for our various State hospitals. At the present time other States and the provinces furnish our largest quota of these workers. It is believed that some of our blind could be trained to do work of this nature. This office

believes that the survey would disclose the material, and that the great mass of our citizens would offer no objection to their employment in certain State and city institutions.

It is believed, further, that this study could very properly be undertaken so that it could be ascertained whether the law providing aid for mothers with dependent children could be amended to grant aid to the children of blind parents.

Recommendations.

1. The Supervisor of Administration recommends for your consideration the desirability of creating a Commissioner of the Blind for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in place of the present Commission, with an unpaid advisory council, one of whom shall be a blind person. He believes that such a reorganization will work for the best interests of all the blind of the Commonwealth. It will centralize and assure to the State a fixed responsibility. The solving of the questions in connection with any relief program demand that the responsibility be fixed, and he accordingly recommends such a centralization of authority.

2. The Supervisor of Administration recommends, further, that the Commissioner of the Blind consider as the fundamental prerequisite of his work the ascertaining of the number and condition of the blind of the Commonwealth, with particular reference to the need and method of granting relief, and to the problem of their re-education and industrial training.

The Supervisor of Administration is convinced that the needs of the blind are critical ones, and that they require legislative attention. He is not unmindful, however, of the vastness of the problem and the ramifications of the subject; in fact, so firmly impressed is he that he presents for legislative action the above recommendations.

Appendix A.

Senate Document No. 230 of the Session of 1916.

An Act to provide Pensions for the Needy Blind.

Be it enacted, etc., as follows:

Section 1. Any person over the age of twenty-one years who is declared blind, in the manner hereinafter provided, and who is not an inmate of any charitable or penal institution in this state, and who is earning less than three hundred dollars per annum, and who has been a bona-fide resident of this state for five years, shall receive from the county in which said person resides a pension or benefit of one hundred and fifty dollars per annum during such period as he remains a resident of said county. In case of change of residence to another county of this state, said pension or benefit shall cease pro rata, but application for pension or benefit hereunder may be renewed by any person entitled to the provisions of this act in the county to which he has removed.

Section 2. The governor, by and with the consent of the council, may appoint a practicing eye-doctor for each of the counties of the commonwealth, who shall be known as "examiner of the needy blind," and whose duty it shall be to examine all applicants for benefit hereunder, to indorse on the application a certificate stating whether or not such applicant is blind, and to file application so indorsed in the office of the county clerk. Compensation for such examiners shall be fixed and paid by the county board. Said examiners shall keep a register in which they shall record the name and address of each applicant examined, together with the date and result of such examination.

Section 3. Any person claiming a benefit, as herein provided, shall make affidavit before the county clerk of the county in which the claimant resides, stating the facts which bring the applicant within the provisions of this act, and said affidavit shall be deemed an application for said benefit. Said affidavit shall be accompanied by an affidavit of three citizens residing in the same county as applicant, stating that they are personally acquainted with such applicant and know that applicant has been a bona-fide resident of the state for five years, and that he is not, to the best of their knowledge and belief, earning more than three hundred dollars per annum, and that he is in need of additional financial relief. The county clerk shall, upon receiving such application, file the same or a copy thereof with the county examiner of the needy blind hereinbefore provided for. The county clerk shall keep a record of all applications made under this act and all reports of examinations made by the county examiner of the needy blind, and quarterly shall certify to the county board of the county the name and residence of each applicant who has been reported blind by the county examiner.

Section 4. The county board of each county may annually levy a tax upon taxable property within the county sufficient to defray the compensation of examiners and the payment of benefits under this act.

Section 5. Any person who makes a false affidavit in order to secure the benefit herein provided shall be liable to the pains and penalties of perjury.

Section 6. All acts and parts of acts inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed.

Section 7. This act shall take effect upon its passage.

Appendix B.

Summary of Laws relative to Relief.

Connecticut. — The authorities having charge of the industrial education for the blind may provide, under certain conditions, machinery, tools and material to an amount not exceeding $200 in any one case, in order to enable the blind to learn a trade. The application must be accompanied by a statement signed by not less than twelve reputable citizens of the town to which the applicant belongs, stating that he is industrious, of good habits and capable of carrying on a trade.

Illinois. — All males over the age of twenty-one, and females over the age of eighteen, who are declared blind by the examiner of the blind, who have an income of $250 or less, and who are not charges in any charitable institution, are eligible for relief. They must have resided in the State for ten consecutive years and in the county for three years. The benefit is $150 a year, payable quarterly by the county. The county officials in each county must appoint a regular practicing physician as examiner for the blind. The affidavit of the person claiming the benefit must be accompanied by the affidavits of two citizens, residents of the county. The examiner receives a fee of $2 for each applicant examined. A law allowing relief was passed in Illinois in 1903, but it was left optional with the different counties to pay this relief. In 1915 the law was amended, making it compulsory for the counties to pay the relief.

Iowa. — All male persons over the age of twenty-one years, or female persons over the age of eighteen years, who are blind and not inmates of any charitable institutions in the State, and not having an income of more than $300 per annum, are entitled to $150 a year county aid. They must have resided in the State for five years and in the county for one year. The examiner of the blind is a regular practicing physician in each county, appointed by the county board of supervisors. The fee for each examination is $2, payable from the county treasury. The applicant must make affidavit, as must also two citizens of the applicant's county, of residence.

Kansas. — The county commissioners may pay a monthly pension not exceeding $50 a month to any person over the age of twenty-one years who has lost both eyes and whose relatives are financially incapable of caring for him. The beneficiary must have been a resident of the State for ten years and of the county for two years, or must have been a resident of the State at the time he was disabled.

Maine. — All persons over twenty-one years of age, not inmates of charitable or penal institutions, whose income is less than $300 a year,

may receive a pension of $200 annually from the State, payable quarterly. The applicant must have been a resident of the State for ten years and the county one year. The municipal officers appoint a regular practicing physician as examiner of the blind, who receives a fee of $2 for each application from the county treasurer. The applicant must make affidavit, as must also two residents of the same county. The pension is paid while the person is a resident of the State or until the disability is removed.

Missouri. — The State of Missouri at its State election in November, 1916, voted in favor of a constitutional amendment removing any prohibition of the granting of pensions to the deserving blind by the general assembly.

New Hampshire. — Any person unable to provide himself with the necessities of life, and who is unable to maintain himself, and who would become a charge upon the public, is eligible for relief. A person must have become blind while a resident of the State, and have been a resident of the county for one year and of the State for five years. Two reputable residents of the county, one of whom shall be a registered physician, must certify that they know the applicant to be blind and entitled to the relief. A sum not exceeding $150 per annum is paid by the county. The county commissioners must annually make an examination as to the qualifications of any person, and they may further, at any time during the year, inquire as to the disability and needs of any person receiving relief. If it appears that the disability could be removed, the amount allowed for relief may be expended for this purpose upon the written consent of the blind person.

New York. — The trustees of the industrial department of the New York State School for the Blind may furnish to worthy poor pupils an outfit of machinery and tools for commencing business at a cost not exceeding $75 each, and charge the same to the proper county.

New York City. — The Commissioner of Public Charities is given annually the sum of $150,000 to expend for the relief of the poor adult blind. A sum not exceeding $100, payable semiannually, is granted to each person not an inmate of any public or private institution in New York City who is in need of relief. A person must be a citizen of the United States and a resident of the city for two years.

Ohio. — Any person who is unable to provide himself with the necessities of life and unable to maintain himself, and who would become a charge upon the public, is eligible for relief. A person must have become blind while a resident of the State, and must have been a resident of the county for one year. The county commissioners must have the evidence of at least two reputable residents of the county, one of whom must be a registered physician, that they know the applicant to be blind and entitled to relief. A sum not exceeding $150 a year is paid quarterly, and such relief is to be in place of all other relief of a public nature. If the board finds that the person might have the disability benefited or removed by surgical operation or medical treatment, and the person entitled to

such relief files his consent in writing, the board may spend for that purpose all or any portion of the relief which they would award to such person for one year. The board must annually make examinations as to any one on the list and increase or decrease the amount within the limits prescribed. At any time during the year the board may make alterations in the sums paid for blind relief.

Wisconsin. — Any male person over the age of twenty-one, or female over the age of eighteen, not an inmate of any charitable, reformatory or penal institution in the State, who is not receiving aid from the State, county or city, and who has been a resident of the State for ten years and the county for three years, having an annual income of less than $250 a year, may, in the discretion of the county board, receive a benefit of $100 a year, payable quarterly. The application for such a benefit must be accompanied by an affidavit of two citizens. The county board appoints a regular practicing physician as examiner of the blind.

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